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The Will to Win

By

E. Boyd Barrett

S.J.

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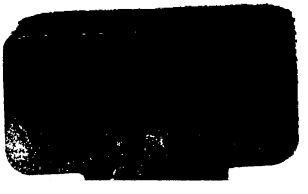

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THE WILL TO WIN

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THE WILL TO WIN

A CALL TO AMERICAN BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

E. BOYD BARRETT, S.J.

M.A. (N.U.I.), D.Ph. (Louvain)

NEW YORK

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

1917

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PREFACE

THIS *booklet was written with the object of putting in a simple and brief form the substance of the author's larger book* "Strength of Will."[1] *The author addresses himself* directly *to the Catholic Boys of America, but he trusts Catholic Girls will understand that, as they bear equal responsibility for the future of their Faith and Fatherland, the booklet is meant equally for them. The author feels that he cannot do justice to his subject in so short a booklet, and recommends those Boys or Girls who become interested in it, to read his larger book.*

[1] *Published by P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 44 Barclay St. New York*

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE written this booklet for you — and by *you* I mean American Catholic Boys — in order to tell you what Will-power means, and to show you how important and necessary it is, and how it may be acquired. I have tried to show you also, that you cannot become good and strong men, that is, men of character, unless you have Will-power, and further that you will be of little or no use to your country if you are weak-willed. It has been well said that "the only way to be a patriotic American is to do your best to become a perfect man," and a perfect man you will not be unless your Will is strong.

In these days you are familiar with the cry "Your country needs you" — and no doubt you have reflected on what the needs of your country are, and on what the future may have in store for her. The years hastening toward you, in which you will have to play your part, will be critical years in your country's history. Is America to

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fulfil her high destiny? Is she to become the great Christian, the great Catholic nation of the future? The home of true liberty, true progress, true civilization? Is she to avail herself of her splendid power and influence and spread the light of truth? Is she to win her way by Justice and Virtue till "the nations gather round her?" *All that depends upon you!* If you Catholic Boys prefer to be weaklings and pleasure-seekers, if you put mammon before God, if you allow your love of Truth and Honor to die within you, then America has a black and shameful future before her. It is for you then to "choose the America that you think is best, and to fashion yourselves in her likeness. If you wish to see America become a perfect country, a Kingdom of God, do you yourself become a perfect individual, a Kingdom of God. The perfect country can only be established by individual men and women who are striving after perfection." But you purpose, I know, to play your part well and bravely in the years to come. Then you must now set about preparing for your part. You must learn to live up to a high ideal. You must perfect your character and furnish your mind.

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You will perfect your character only if you strengthen your Will. And you will furnish your mind only if you avail yourself of every opportunity of education.

I said just now "You must learn to live up to a high ideal." But what exactly does that mean? What is an "ideal" in this sense? As you know, a sculptor does not set about carving his marble block without having a very clear and definite image in his mind of the figure he purposes to create. He means to reproduce in marble, as perfectly as he can, the image he has formed in his mind. He intends, so to speak, to translate his idea into marble. Now, a man with an "ideal" sets himself a task similar to that of the sculptor. He has an image in his mind of the kind of man he means to be. And he tries to conform his acts and conduct to that image, so that he may make himself like to it. He translates that image into his own life, so that he comes to represent it as perfectly as possible.

Now, we should all have ideals and try to conform our lives to them. But, of course, they should be noble ideals. They should be in harmony with thoroughly good principles. They should be clear and definite

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and practical — that is, common-sense, and quite realizable. A day-dream in which you picture yourself merely as famous and illustrious is not an *ideal* — it is a foolish yearning after notoriety.

In your ideal, picture yourself as a sincere and earnest Catholic, devoted to your country's welfare, kindly and chivalrous towards all, "one who does not mind whose bundle he carries providing he relieves some aching arm." Picture yourself as the kind of man you would be justly proud to be — the kind of man those who truly love you would like you to be. If, as may well happen, you are to be a carpenter, a shop-keeper, or a doctor, remember you must set yourself to be a stanch Catholic and a true American in your career as carpenter, shop-keeper, or doctor. Aim at being a faithful member of the parish Sodality, of the Temperance Society, and of the St. Vincent de Paul or other charitable society. Aim too, at knowing the literature and history of America. Study well your country and your fellow-countrymen, not critically nor captiously, but affectionately. Learn to love all that is best in them. God has lavished his gifts, his most splendid works of nature

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on America. Your rivers, forests, hills, and plains surpass those of other countries. Be proud of America as of your mother. Study her social and economic problems, and play a manly part in the nation's fight for the amelioration of the poor. In your profession or business be honest, painstaking, progressive, and energetic. Take advantage of the best and most scientific methods for developing your enterprises. In fine, let your ideal be practical as well as noble; definite as well as beautiful.

You see now what is meant by an ideal in life. It is the concrete embodiment of high principles — it is an image which expresses for us what our conduct should be. Or, to put it more plainly, our ideal should be such that, were we to describe it to one who questioned us on our views of life and duty, such a one would clearly see we held high principles.

However, let us now recall to mind that it is one thing to have a high ideal, and quite another thing to live up to it. We often see quite plainly what we should do, what our ideal calls for from us, but alas! we neglect to act as we ought. It is not enough then to have an ideal — it is also necessary

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to have the power of conforming our lives to that ideal. That power is possessed by men of character — men whose lives are dominated by high principles, by ideals. This power of dominating our lives, which is the basis of character, is nothing else than *Strength of Will.* Without Will-power our Ideals are vain and futile dreams. Without Will-power we cannot be true to our Ideals, we cannot rule our conduct in conformity with them, we cannot become the men we purpose to be. The Will alone, assisted and inspired by God's grace, enables us to direct the course of our lives, to shape our destiny, to fashion and mold our conduct according to principles we cherish, so that our lives may be bright lights to shine before fellow-men.

For a moment I suppose that you have fashioned for yourself your ideal, the clear and definite image of what you would be proud to be, of what Faith and Fatherland call for from you. But now, turn your eyes upon yourself as you are at the present moment! How does your character stand? Is your Will strong? Have you self-control? Have you the power to make efforts, energetic efforts, at the call of duty? Can

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you persevere in making such efforts? Are you master of yourself? Can you control your impulses and inclinations? Do you yield easily to the attractions of pleasure? Have you habits of which you are ashamed, which you know are wrong? Are you weak and cowardly at times, and afraid of what others may say? Do you shrink from a little physical pain? Ask yourself these questions frankly, and you will know the answer to the question, "Is your Will strong?"

And, if you feel forced to confess that your Will is weak, how are you going to live up to your Ideal? How are you going to dominate your life and conduct and make yourself a living representation of your Ideal? Is it not necessary for you to acquire more Will-power so as to face the long and trying struggle of life that lies before you?

Yes! you need more Strength of Will than you possess at present. You need to perfect your Will, and to make it a powerful instrument. You need to learn how to use your Will aright, how to keep it in good trim, and in a high state of efficiency. It is your best and greatest possession, the most wonderful thing you have. It is worth know-

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ing well, using well, and perfecting. It is worth studying and training. It will repay you better than you will be repaid by training your mind, or training your memory, or training your hand to paint or to carve or to strike music from a key-board.

And so to sum up what I have hitherto said: Christ, your King, needs you — to be a stanch Catholic; America, your country, needs you — to be a true patriot; you cannot obey these calls unless you perfect and develop your Will. Without a strong Will you lack that bold and confident manliness which inspires men to answer, as I have known a young Irish soldier to answer, such questions as these: "Are you Irish?" "Yes! thank God." "Are you a Catholic?" "Rather!" Strength of Will, like a faithful friend, will come to your help in every difficulty. It will be with you through life's long battle until the end. And when the end comes, you will be able to say truly, in every sense,

"Gladly I lived, and gladly I die,
And I lay me down *with a Will.*"

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The Will to Win

A CALL TO CATHOLIC BOYS AND GIRLS

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SECTION I

THE WILL

IN order to carry out some external task we require, as you know, *light* to see what we are doing, and *strength* to accomplish the work. Similarly for our inner, spiritual tasks we require light and strength. Now light is supplied to us by our Intellect, for it sees, knows, understands, and strength is given us by our Will, for it puts forth effort, strives, and achieves. Without Will, the Intellect would be a vain and useless power of seeing visions and dreams; without Intellect, the Will would be a blind force struggling in darkness, beating the air. Both Intellect and Will are therefore necessary, but of the two powers the Will is supreme, at least in practical matters, for while it can refuse to follow the guidance of the Intellect, the Intellect cannot refuse to show the way when the Will commands.

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The Will then is the source of our activity, the source of energy and effort. It commands, controls, and calls into operation all our faculties. It directs the intellect to think, the memory to store up knowledge, and the arms to labor. It is by natural right the king and ruler of our soul and body. It can tyrannize over our other faculties, and force the hands to toil on, though they are tired, and the mind to study on in spite of weariness. It can make us dash to the ground a cup of water even though we be dying of thirst, and it can, if it be as strong as it should be, reject the most alluring pleasures, or the most well-deserved repose.

When the Intellect points out some course of duty, however hard, the Will can brace itself to the task of fulfilling it. And so it is we hear wonderful stories of long and painful labors undertaken and carried out in spite of difficulty and danger — voyages to unknown lands or to Arctic regions — or tales of scrupulous and heroic honesty. Such a tale is that of a poor farmer who lost all he had and incurred a debt of two thousand dollars. This debt he set himself to pay off. He had a large family to support, and, as he could earn only fifteen dollars a week,

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his savings were very small. Still he was not discouraged, but for thirty years he continued to save up, and at last paid off his debt in full.

The work that the Will has to do is harder and more varied than that of any other faculty. It is called on to work at every minute of the day. In the morning, it is the Will which forces us to rise from bed, in spite of our inclination to sleep on. At night it is the Will which makes us kneel down, in spite of fatigue, to say our prayers. All day long the Will is at work forcing us to extend energy, to make efforts, to refuse pleasures, to resist temptations, to suppress our feelings. It is our supremely necessary power, for without it we should be mere animals, mere creatures of impulse and passion. With it we can reach great heights of nobility, and accomplish deeds of wondrous sublimity. We need but turn over pages that tell of Christian martyrs to find many examples — such, for instance, as that of Magdalen, the Japanese martyr, who, as she was being burned to death, gathered up in her hands the red-hot coals and crowned her brow with them, as though they were roses. And this act, beyond question, was

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a human act, an act of her Will, inspired and aided by God's grace.

So far I have described the Will as a great and wonderful power, but you will ask of course, "Has every one such a Will as you describe, and, if so, why is not every one able to do great things?" Well, every one has a Will, and every one has a certain amount of Will-power, *but every one has not a strong Will, and great deeds remain comparatively rare precisely because men's Wills remain weak.* We possess, all of us, quite sufficient Will-power to set ourselves with success to the training and perfecting of our Wills. Just as we possess sufficient Will-power to train our bodies, and train our minds, so we possess sufficient Will-power to train our Wills. And when we do set ourselves to train our Wills, they soon become, as I hope to show later on, strong and powerful.

It is well, even here, to remember that the tasks of ordinary life, and in particular religious duties, tend to train and develop the Will. The constant discipline of school-life, the laws and rules to be observed at games, the unwritten code of gentlemanly conduct towards friends and strangers — all

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this helps the Will to acquire power of control. Then the duties, sacrifices, penances that our religion imposes on us, assist us to self-mastery. We are taught to restrain our evil inclinations, and to make efforts to imitate those who are good. We are taught, too, to persevere in doing good in spite of difficulties and we are shown how to make and keep resolutions. God's grace above all, won by prayer and the Sacraments, inspires and strengthens the Will and aids it to do its work well. Hence it is that Will-training, so to say, should be something natural to Catholics. They have already learned the essentials of the method — and their religion tends to make them Will-heroes. Take, as an example, the story of a little lad, dying in great pain, but not allowing himself to utter a sob or a moan. The kindly doctor who was seated by his bedside asked him why he wasn't crying, and told him to cry as it would do him good and give him a little relief. But the brave little fellow had other ideas. "Ah, no!" he said, "I won't cry. Our Lord didn't cry on the Cross."

While, however, Religion and the discipline of ordinary life tend to train the Will, it is

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our duty to use other and more direct means. The Will is a natural faculty, and as such, like the intellect or memory, it is to be developed and perfected by direct natural means. The fact that prayer and meditation tend to improve and train the intellect does not justify men in neglecting other means of training it. So too, the fact that a virtuous life tends to train the Will is not a justification for omitting direct Will-training. We must then devote ourselves to developing and perfecting our wills by natural methods, while at the same time we should pray for Strength of Will, and use supernatural means, as though all depended on them.

It is a certain and consoling fact that the Will can always be strengthened and improved. This has been held and taught by saints, ascetics, and by all sane psychologists. *No matter how weak the Will may be, no matter how inert and lifeless it may have become through want of exercise, it can always be improved.* Indeed, in this respect, the Will is the most wonderful of our faculties. With due training it grows strong, and becomes very powerful. Its growth in power is swifter than that of other faculties,

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and more certain. There is then no reason for despair or discouragement even if the Will be extremely weak. Of course improvement can only be secured at the price of effort, but if the price is paid the improvement will be obtained.

There are various maladies and faults of Will which impair its efficiency. The two chief maladies are hesitation and impetuosity. In each case the symptoms are evident. They are contrary in character. If, before a decision or choice, the Will is drawn this way and that in painful oscillation, if a feeling of helplessness, worry, inability to choose is experienced, while opposing motives rapidly and interminably influence the Will now to take one side, and now to take the other, and if a sense of uncertainty and depression takes possession of you, you will recognize the presence of the first of these maladies, hesitation. This hesitancy or indecision becomes habitual and destroys your power of choosing or deciding on reasonable grounds. Almost invariably it forces you to make a haphazard, blind choice in order to escape from your state of perplexity. The symptoms of impetuosity are briefly these — you find you make your choices,

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even in important matters, almost before you are conscious of it. You are swept away at once by the first motive that presents itself vividly before your mind. You are carried away by a restless impulse to act at once. You do not deliberate calmly as you should. You do not weigh and compare motives in a reasonable, tranquil manner. You choose or decide in a "devil-may-care" way. You place no check on your impulse to act, but allow your feelings and sentiments to provoke your Will to move, before the light of intellect is thrown on the road.

Opposed alike to hesitation and impetuosity, we have the good quality of decisiveness. A decisive Will, unlike a hesitating Will, chooses or resolves without undue and futile deliberations or oscillations. Unlike an impetuous Will it refuses to act unless on clear grounds, and for solid reasons. A decisive Will can of course choose or resolve in a very short time where there is question of a principle, for it has already deliberated upon this matter, and determined to hold firmly to the principle at all costs and at all times. It acts then with iron strength and without a moment's delay. A resolute boy

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snaps out a "*No!*" to temptation like the crash of a hammer on an anvil.

Before concluding this section on the Will there is a point to which it may be well to call your attention. A strong-willed man is not necessarily a good man. Many men, whose lives were ill-spent, and who sought to do evil, had strong Wills. The principles which dominated their lives were false and bad principles. But in this booklet written for you, American boys, I take it for granted that you are protected from that possibility, because I am sure that the principles which guide your lives, which you have learned at school and from your parents, are sound and good principles. You know what justice and truth mean, you know that at all times, and in all places, "what is right is right, and what is wrong is wrong," and that there the matter ends. And so, assuming that your ideal is good and true, it follows that for you Strength of Will means virtue. The stronger your Will is, the better you will be. The stronger your Will is, the more good you will achieve, and the truer you will be to Faith and Country.

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SECTION II

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTH OF WILL

IN this Section, in order to bring more concretely before your mind the Importance of Strength of Will, I make two assumptions. First, I assume, as I have a right to do, for it is admitted by all, that "man's life on earth is a warfare." Secondly I assume that you have, in accordance with your ideal, chosen your side in that warfare, the side of duty and of justice.

Life then is a war, a long and bitter struggle, already begun for you. It is a battle against clever, bitter, and unrelenting enemies, enemies without and enemies within. The fighting never ceases — at no place or time in life is there a moment's truce. On occasion it may seem that truce has been declared, and that you are left unmolested, but this appearance of peace is deceptive. It is only a wile of your enemy. The struggle all through is a life or death struggle — it is not a matter about which you

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may trifle — it is too real, too serious, too momentous.

Since life is a warfare, since it is a battle that must be won, a battle of terrible intensity, it behooves you to prepare for it. You must be ready, trained, fully armed, and well prepared. You must be foreseeing. You must be efficient in every respect. Unreadiness, unpreparedness means defeat. You must arm yourself with the best possible instrument, you must learn its use thoroughly, and keep it in the best fighting trim. If you do not avail yourself of the best weapon, you will be unable to conquer. If you do not know how to use this weapon, or if you suffer it to get out of order, or if you put it aside in disdain, you will likewise be overcome. Now, as you will guess, the best instrument for winning life's battle is the Will, and no doubt you will agree that you must perfect it, and perfect yourself in its use. Surely then a Strong Will is of the greatest importance.

It may seem strange to you that life should be described as a long battle — and a fierce battle. But when you reflect on it, you will see that there is no exaggeration in all this. Between right and wrong there is eternal

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enmity; between the angels of light and the angels of darkness, between duty and treachery, between justice and injustice, between truth and falsehood, the fight will rage to the end of the world — "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent only will bear it away." But even if life be regarded from other points of view than that of good and evil, you will also see what a warfare it is. Can knowledge and wisdom be won without a long struggle? Can progress in art be won without much effort? Can success in business or in the learned professions be achieved without years of thought and labor? Must not man's brow be bathed many times in sweat before he gains even the natural fruits of natural toil?

In every walk of life we find that we must fight a bitter fight in order to win — in things spiritual as well as in things temporal. Even for material success Strength of Will is necessary. Our portion here below is work and effort — and work and effort demand Strength of Will. Above all, if life is to be bright and happy, if we are to face difficulties and failure with courage and lightheartedness, if we are to lend a hand to help

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others and to do so generously, we need to have Strong Wills.

In earlier sections I pointed out that we cannot fulfil our two supreme duties to God and to our country unless we perfect our characters, and I quoted the saying, well worth remembering, "The only way to be a patriotic American is to do your best to become a perfect man." It may now be well to consider more in detail the need of perfecting our characters for our own sakes. This need will perhaps best be seen by means of a three-fold classification — showing three different ways in which duties are faced, or faults corrected.

The first class then is that of boys who realize that they have some serious faults and bad habits, and who see that there are certain things which they ought to do, but which they don't do. They are anxious to get rid of their failings. They promise themselves to correct them, but as it happens they never make any serious effort to do so, and their faults and evil habits remain and grow stronger.

The second class of boys have likewise faults to correct and neglected duties to fulfil. They desire very much to improve.

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They make some efforts — but their efforts are insufficient and their faults remain. They are only half-hearted and half-serious in their endeavors and of course they fail. They fail as completely as the first class. They too are weak-willed.

The third class of boys have also faults and bad habits. They see clearly, as indeed the others see, that if they are to improve they must make strong efforts. They make really strong efforts and they succeed. They mend their ways effectively. These boys are strong-willed.

Now this classification, though it seems dry and formal, is very true to nature. If you think a little of your own manners of facing duties or of getting rid of faults, you will, I think, be able to find to which class you belong. If you belong to the second class, while you show signs of good will in making some efforts, still you are likely, very likely, to slip back into the first class and give up making any efforts at all.

It may be well now to consider a little what will happen later on — what kind of man you are likely to become or rather are certain to become if you remain in the first or in the third class. And I think we may

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assume that when you are a man you will be in one of the two extreme classes — that of the weak-willed, or that of the strong-willed. Let us consider, first of all, the future that lies before weak-willed men.

Are weak-willed men likely to be happy? Are they likely to succeed in life, or to do good? Have they much hope of coming out victors in life's long war? Is it possible for them to lead honorable useful lives? I think we must answer "No!" to each of these questions. A weak-willed man shirks most of his duties. He descends very soon to falsehood and deceit. He indulges himself on almost every occasion, and gives way to temptation. He does not try to restrain his passions — he becomes intemperate and sensual. He cares little for the interests of his Faith or of his country. And he often betrays his friends. He is so selfish that he is ready to betray any cause, however noble, for personal ends. There is no sense of honor in him. His example is evil — or at least he is an object of contempt. He enjoys no peace of soul, for he carries a heavy burden on his conscience. He is a coward at heart, and fears the opinions of his fellow-men. He knows he is a failure

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— and he is pointed at as such. He knows that he is utterly defeated in life's battle, and that he has lived the life of a fool.

I have of course painted this picture in strong colors, and it is perhaps somewhat overdone. Still we have not to search far in our own experience of life before we find examples of men who have given way to passion and quickly gone under, even though perhaps they retained to the end some redeeming qualities.

Let us consider now the life of a good man of Strong Will. Is his life likely to be happy? Is he likely to win true success and to do good? Will he conquer in the battle of life? Will his life be useful and honorable? Now I think we must answer "Yes" to each of these questions! A strong-willed man faces his duties without shirking. He performs them well and fully. He is not afraid to be honest and truthful. He does not give way to his passions. He checks and controls them. He is not a pleasure-seeker, he avoids self-indulgence. He is temperate, chaste, and self-controlled. He is faithful to his friends, and keeps his promises. He sacrifices himself for his Faith and his country. He is tenacious and persevering in carrying

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out his resolutions. If he has some hard or painful duty to perform, he faces it calmly — he does not square his jaws, clench his teeth and hands, and furrow his brow with a diabolical frown like moving picture heroes. He knows the Will is not helped by grimaces. But he goes straight towards his object, even though the road be rough, quietly, resolutely, and cheerfully. He knows his own power. He is confident and self-reliant. He is conscious of his influence over other men — for Strength of Will gives a certain masterfulness. But for all that, he does not bully or override others, he respects others' rights and feelings, and a quiet reasonableness characterizes his conduct. His mind is at peace for he is conscious that he does his duty. He plays his part fearlessly and fights on to the end, iron-willed in his determination to win the battle of life and gain the victor's crown.

Men of this strong-willed type are by no means rare. They are to be found in every town and village. Such are those men who do their duty to the end, in the face of supreme sacrifice. "Tell my parents," said a young French soldier dying before Verdun, "that I die happy. I have never failed

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to do my duty." "I have," wrote a young Irish patriot to a friend, on the eve of his execution, "I have, thank God, no vain regrets. Whatever I have done, I have done as a soldier of Ireland in what I believed to be my country's best interests." To such men, of resolute Will, death presents no great terror. They freely choose to live up to their ideals and they have the strength to do so.

To sum up this section. We have seen that life means warfare, and that it is a matter of supreme importance for us to arm ourselves with the best possible weapon, namely an efficient and strong Will. We have considered the pitiful results that follow from weakness of Will in the life of the individual, and the happy results that follow from Strength of Will. Granted these facts, it is for us to decide whether or not it is important for us to have Strong Wills.

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SECTION III

THE NEED OF WILL-TRAINING

IN the last section we considered the importance of having a Strong Will. Now we must decide whether or not it is necessary for us to undergo specific Will-training in order to acquire Strength of Will.

As you know your faculty of Willing is a natural faculty — just as natural as your faculty of running, jumping, playing football, playing the piano, painting, remembering, imagining, or thinking out mathematical problems. All these natural powers or faculties require to be exercised and trained before they become efficient. So also your power of willing must be exercised and trained before it becomes efficient. You would regard it as very foolish to compete in a running race or in a jumping competition without practise and training. You regard it as quite reasonable to practise kicking and passing, day after day, week after week, in order to become good and efficient at football. In like manner music,

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painting, memorizing, solving problems require long periods of exercise and training before much progress is made and before efficiency is attained. So also in the matter of Willing. The Will too needs much exercise and training, and unless it gets this exercise and training it remains weak and inefficient.

You will observe that faculties are trained in very different ways. You train for jumping in one way and you train for music in another. The way to train for football is not the way to train for mathematics. So also the way to train for Willing is not the way to train for painting. The Will needs its own specific training.

It is true of course that some men need Will-training less than others — just as some can compete successfully in a running race after less training than others. But this only means that in some the faculty of willing or of running is stronger and naturally more perfect than in others. Normally all require Will-training and all can be improved by it.

In these comparisons of other faculties with the Will, there is one important difference to be noted and remembered. For

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no man is it absolutely necessary to train his faculty of running or painting or playing music or solving mathematical problems. Men can go through life without ever having to run a race or play a piece of music or paint or solve a mathematical problem. But as regards the faculty of Willing this is not so. All men must face Will-contests in life. All men are tried, and tempted, and confronted with difficult duties. For all men a strong Will is necessary, and on all men it is incumbent in some way or other to train their Wills.

There can be little doubt too that modern life, such especially as exists in America, presents so many dangers and difficulties, that a strong Will is an urgent necessity. From your earliest days at School you have been subjected to tests and trials and temptations of various kinds — I do not mean in moral matters merely, but in matters of honor, courage, and endurance. Your games test you, your studies test you, your loyalty to your school is tested. You, American Boys, enjoy liberty and independence which, while it gives you a splendid opportunity of showing grit and virtue, affords you also opportunities of doing dishonorable things

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without the danger of being punished. For you, perhaps more than for boys of other nations, *Strength of Will* is all-important in early youth. It is of course supremely important for all boys, but *for you in particular it is important because you begin life younger.*

While still very young — those at least of you who live in cities — you find yourselves in the midst of intense activity, in a rapidly moving, hustling stream of life in which there seems little opportunity for quiet reflection. The importance of "*doing*" things obscures the importance of "*thinking*" and "*praying.*" The urgency of the present dulls the sound of the future's insistent call. You feel it hard to prepare for the future, since the present is so full, so attractive, so engaging. You feel it hard to draw away from the swift current of events, and quietly make ready for the far-off, dim future. And yet that is precisely what you must do. *You must train your character by strengthening your Will so that you may play a big part and play it well later on.*

You may ask, or rather perhaps it may be necessary to point out clearly once again, the part the Will plays in ordinary actions

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of life, so that you may see the need of Will-training more concretely. Let us take, for instance, an experience that I am sure you have often had, that of getting yourself to plunge into the water from the end of a spring-board on a cold day. An analysis or introspection of what passes in the mind on such occasions may interest you.

Let us suppose that we find ourselves standing, on a rather cold evening, at the end of a spring-board, prepared for a plunge. We have come down to bathe, thinking it would be nice and warm, and now it has turned rather chilly. Something has to be done, we cannot return without bathing, and yet the water looks cold and uninviting. We cross our arms, rub our shins together, shiver a little, wish we were anywhere else, and hesitate.

The task of plunging seems harder and harder, the longer we hesitate. We know that, and resolve to go in before very long — but that very long is indefinite. The thought of the coldness of the water, and of the shock of the first contact, holds us back. A certain inertia takes possession of us and we find it hard to take action. We feel the board under our feet, and the

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wind which tosses our hair. We see and hear things very distinctly and yet we take little interest in what we see or hear. At the focus of consciousness is the thought — "I must after all go in." We know that if we brace up our Wills to the task — if we will to will — that we shall be able to plunge in; but we refuse to will to will — we don't want to put that constraint on ourselves. It seems too cruel.

Meanwhile things are getting worse and coming to a climax. We feel colder. The task seems harder. But the necessity of action is more and more stringent. We are gradually, although unconsciously, and seemingly against our Will, being moved forward. We are tending closer and closer towards the climax. Little now separates us from our fate. The Will is no longer affected very much by motives for or against. Force of habit now decides all. For a moment our eyes rest on the water, the image of ourselves swimming about grows more and more realistic. A momentary "blankness" seems to pass across the surface of consciousness. We become aware that an effort has just been made — and that our toes are kicking away from the board — we

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are now plunging into the water and the Will-act is over.

You will see from this analysis or *introspection* how little things sway and move the Will, and how helpless and dependent on little circumstances we are if we have not a resolute Will, and a clear purpose before us.

It is well for you to bear in mind that you are not merely *an individual*, you are also *a child of the nation*. If the nation as a whole is to be decisive, earnest, thorough, the individuals must first of all be such. If the nation is to have a high "morale," to have a strong national "Will to Win," to have a lofty moral tone, the individuals, the children of the nation, must first of all be strong and healthy-willed. *The spirit of the nation is the spirit of the nations' sons. The spirit of the Catholic Church in America is the spirit of her children.* If, as I trust, you mean to be good citizens and thorough Catholics, and if, as a consequence, you mean to be useful to your Faith and Fatherland, your first and chief need is to have a Strong Will, improved by God's grace, and this Strong Will is to be won by paying the price, by training your Will!

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SECTION IV

RESOLUTIONS

A "RESOLUTION" as you know is an act of the Will whereby you set yourself to achieve something. You resolve, for instance, to go to early Mass every day for a week. You propose, promise yourself, and make up your mind to do so. You mean to do it, and you commit yourself to this course of action. You make a contract with yourself to do it, and you feel in consequence under an obligation to do it. That course of action has now a certain claim upon you. If you neglect to fulfil your promise you are conscious of a certain unworthiness, or even of dishonor. The course of action resolved on calls for fulfilment — you have promised, and you feel that you should make good your undertaking. The promise, or contract you make with yourself, about achieving something, is the first part of the Resolution — *the making*. The actual fulfilling of the promise is the second part of the Resolution — *the*

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keeping. This too is an act or series of acts of the Will, wherein the Will, as master of mind and body, calls upon and commands the other faculties to perform the work stipulated. This power of making and keeping Resolutions is one of the most important powers we have. Here the Will performs a great function; it directs and controls our conduct; it decides our future. It is responsible for that conduct which it decides on and brings into being, and so it is, in a sense, a creator. If it produces what is good, we are virtuous. If it produces what is evil, we are bad. If it faithfully carries out the Resolutions it makes, it is strong. If it fails to carry out such resolutions, it is weak. Its ability to keep Resolutions is its supreme test, and hence the man who "keeps his word," and is "faithful to" or "sticks to" his principles is the most honorable of men.

From these remarks you will see that a Resolution is a very serious matter. It concerns us vitally. It tests and tries us. It is of deep significance. It is the most "sacred" of our natural acts, in so far as natural acts can be "sacred." It is not a thing to trifle with. If we make and break Res-

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olutions carelessly and lightly we injure our Will — we undermine its strength, we lessen, so to say, its dignity, and we degrade it. A Resolution should be made well, or not at all. It should only be made after careful thought, and with deep earnestness. It should be kept with rigorous exactitude. We should not make Resolutions that may be perhaps beyond our strength. If we do we run the risk of failure, and failure is injurious to the Will. *We must secure a victory every time in every Resolution.*

Let us now suppose, in order to study a little the art of making and keeping Resolutions, that we set ourselves to overcome a habit of unpunctuality. That is what the Will sets itself to achieve. Now, how are we to go about the work? How are we to make the necessary Resolution well, and to secure success? First of all we must formulate the Resolution.

To formulate the Resolution thus, "I will never be late for a duty," would be to court failure. Such a resolution would be too vague, too great, and too difficult. We must render it definite, small, and well within our powers. Perhaps this would do. "I will never be late for important duties."

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Even that is too vague and too great. *Divide et impera!* Take the matter in parts and conquer the parts one by one. So let us resolve about punctuality in one important duty. "I will get up at once when called in the morning." That is now sufficiently precise and it will strike hard at *one* of our faults of unpunctuality. Still we can render it more definite by means of a time limit. And so we resolve thus, "*Each day, for the next ten days, I will get up at once when called in the morning.*"

So far we have merely *formulated* or drawn up the Resolution. It must now be *made* by the Will as earnestly as possible. It will not suffice merely to say it over a few times and to memorize it. The whole Will with all its force and energy must, so to speak, be hurled into the Resolution. I must make it as firmly and seriously as if my life depended on it. Again and again, every day, I must make it in this manner. I must strive to secure that success will be absolutely certain, almost inevitable. I must make my Resolution part of myself, and identify myself wholly with it. I must be able to say, "Yes, before God, I really mean to get up every morning, at once, when I

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am called for the next ten mornings. I will keep this Resolution. I know I can keep it and I will keep it. I will take every precaution to keep it, and I will make any sacrifice that reason demands in order to render its fulfilment certain."

So far we have described the part of the Will in the Resolution, but the intellect too at the command of the Will plays its part. The intellect is the light that illuminates. It ponders over the uses and advantages of punctuality and proposes new motives to elicit a stronger determination in the Will. It throws new light on the object resolved on by the Will and renders it more attractive. It exposes the fallacies of hostile motives and maintains by its reasoning the sense of conviction.

Next, in the making as in the keeping of a Resolution, we must solicit help from heaven. Above all we need God's grace. We must pray then for the grace to be faithful to the Resolution, remembering that the attainment of punctuality and the mastery over ourselves in this matter will count for God's glory and our own salvation. We even go so far as to offer little acts of self-denial, or undergo some trifling self-inflicted pain,

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in order to win the desired grace, and to intensify the seriousness of our Resolution.

Resolutions made in this thorough way are certain of success — provided always they be well within our strength and that we keep up our efforts to the end. The *making* of a Resolution thus passes imperceptibly into the *keeping* of a Resolution, for we go on making and reiterating it until it is fulfilled. When at last it is fulfilled to the letter we experience a splendid sense of satisfaction, of duty well done, and of self-confidence. We realize, at such a moment, the meaning and the value of Will-power. We realize fully that we have within us a great power, and that there are things, even hard things, that we can do, if only we set ourselves to do them.

I suppose then that you have acquired the power of getting up at once when called in the morning. This is a first and important step towards acquiring the virtue of punctuality. Other similar steps should now be taken in due order — resolution should follow resolution, each directed towards a different part of the virtue, each well made and duly fulfilled — until at length the virtue as a whole is acquired. This, of course,

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will take time, and demand perseverance, but it will involve nothing beyond your strength.

These are now a few points, which I shall summarize briefly, and which it is well to bear in mind. Some of them are repetitions of points already noted.

(1) The Resolution should always be definite, limited in scope, and well within our power.

(2) Careful consideration should precede each Resolution. It must not be hastily formulated. It should be carefully chosen, and well directed towards an important point of the object to be achieved.

(3) The *making* and *keeping* of the Resolution depends wholly on yourself. In this matter the burden falls on your own shoulders, and no one can bear it for you. Some help may however be obtained from advice in the matter of *formulating* your Resolution.

(4) Resolutions demand a great output of effort. Effort is the price you must be prepared to pay for success. If the price is not paid, success will not be secured.

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(5) If through weakness or passing carelessness or misadventure we fail in a Resolution, let us suppose on the third or fourth day, the Resolution must not be abandoned. It is still there and it calls still for fulfilment. We must at once remake and reiterate it with redoubled energy, and we must persevere in it until the stipulated time is up. If the first lapse or failure meant that *ipso facto* the Resolution ceased to exist, we should be working on the absurd assumption that our Resolution was only to be kept until it was broken!

(6) Some Resolutions, those for instance which aim at avoiding a moral fault, something bad in itself, must of course be kept absolutely. They are *absolute* and do not admit of exceptions or conditions. We must keep them even at the expense of displeasing those we love. Other Resolutions however are not *absolute*, and so, without harm, they may be conditioned. They admit of exceptions. An example will make this clear. Suppose, for instance, a boy resolves to go to early

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Mass every day during vacation. Now it may happen that during vacation he catches a bad cold. However he resolves all the same to get up and go to Mass. When he is getting up, his mother comes in and says, "No! you must stay in bed to-day." What is he to do? If his mother really insists, and he sees there is question of obedience, then evidently *his duty is to obey.* But does this break his Resolution? Surely not! His Resolution, if it was properly formulated, carried with it at least the implicit condition, "I will go to early Mass, etc., *unless it is my duty not to do so.* In all such matters we must obey right reason.

(7) Resolutions I said should be definite, limited, and well within our power. What then of big, heroic Resolutions? Are they never to be made? Well, some Resolutions though apparently very big are well within our power. They are shown to be quite possible by the example of other men who make them. Take, for instance, the Resolution to abstain from all intoxi-

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cating liquors during our whole lives. This Resolution we call the "Heroic Offering" or the "Pledge for Life." It is of course a gigantic Resolution, and it seems contrary to all our rules to attempt such a Resolution. Still strangely enough it is not so. It is well within our powers. It is definite, precise, and limited in many ways. Besides, it is shown to be quite possible by the example of others who make and keep it. Also it carries with it great graces, and a great inspiration — it means so much good for our Faith and our Fatherland — and so we need not be at all afraid to make it.

(8) The good results achieved by Resolutions are very wonderful. Whole lives have been changed for the better by well-made and well-kept Resolutions. Often the good results seem to come very slowly, but they come very surely. In the morning the mountain-top in the distance that you mean to reach, seems very far away, and each step that you take as you walk towards it is a very tiny advance. Yet by mid-

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day, or a little later, you find yourself on the summit and you are astonished when you think of the distance that stretched before you that morning. So too, by fidelity to your Resolutions, you will achieve very remarkable results, results as remarkable, for instance, as that of learning thoroughly a difficult language by devoting to it five or ten minutes a day.

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SECTION V

A METHOD OF WILL-TRAINING

WE have seen that the Will needs to be trained like other natural faculties, such as the faculties of running, jumping, painting, remembering, and reasoning. Now as the one and only way to train a natural faculty is by judiciously and methodically exercising it, we may conclude that the Will is to be trained by judicious and methodical exercise. The Will then must submit to the methodical repetition of some Will-act, in order to gain strength and efficiency — just as a champion runner must again and again cover his course before he is in perfect training. Now the Will-act that is most suitable for repetition, and which best exercises the Will, is a Resolution, well made and kept. In Resolutions the Will has to will strongly, to make efforts, to exert self-control, and to persevere. Indeed, a Resolution embraces every activity of the Will, and though in

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theory it might be better to choose some less complex Will-act, still in practise it will be found that a Resolution is the best exercise for Will-training. A Resolution well made and well kept braces up the Will, and gives it a healthy tone. If another Resolution follows, the good condition of the Will is maintained and improved, and so on. Meanwhile the Will grows in strength and so to say works more freely and more easily. It makes efforts with greater readiness, and puts more strength into them. It controls impulses with greater ease and decisiveness. According as the Will improves a sense of power is experienced which makes us more confident, and more masterful in our self-control.

Now, what we aim at in this section is the suggesting of a method for carrying out well-ordered Will-exercises. Isolated Will-acts though good in themselves are wholly insufficient for Will-training. Occasional acts of self-denial will not train the Will although they have a good effect. Will-training must be thoroughly methodical. It must also be thoroughly serious. Exercises done in a half-hearted or careless way will do no good. The exercises must be

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done *seriously*, they must evoke *effort*, and they must be undergone with *regularity*. These three notes (1) *effort*, (2) *regularity*, and (3) *seriousness* must characterize the exercises. No fear need be entertained as to ultimate success. If the Will is exercised it must improve. That is the law of all natural faculties. About success there need be no misgiving, and so the exercises should be undertaken hopefully and confidently.

There are two Will-qualities in particular which we must at first aim at winning —

(1) Power to resist impulse.
(2) Power to make efforts.

We have, of course, already in some small degree these qualities; unless we had them we could not train our Wills, for Will-power is needed to train Will. But we have them in small quantity and in poor condition. We must aim then (1) at having power to resist calmly and decisively, even the strongest impulses, and (2) we must aim at being able to make at all times and places really powerful Will-efforts.

The exercises then will aim firstly at training the Will to resist impulses, arising from natural tendencies or aroused by outside

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attractions. If, for example, when very hungry and thirsty you sit down to dinner and you set yourself to eat and drink very slowly and quietly, suppressing all quick movements, or if you decide to drink only half as much as usual in spite of your thirst, and to eat less than usual in spite of your hunger, you will be performing an exercise of the kind required. In the second place the exercises will aim at training the Will to make efforts in spite of disinclination and even pain. If, for example, when very tired and weary you go to your room, but instead of sitting or lying down to rest you deliberately set yourself to arrange very carefully your books and furniture, picking up pieces of paper from the floor, and dusting your table and chairs, and perhaps taking your clothes from drawers and carefully brushing and folding them, all in spite of your fatigue and weariness, you would be performing an exercise of the kind required in the second case.

These examples of exercises will suggest to you many others, and indeed there is no limit to the number of such exercises. In connection with your meals, your prayers, your studies, your work, your school-rules,

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your habits of dress or conversation, many such exercises can be devised. There are other exercises too of a different type, and technically better suited for Will-training, of which I will speak later. For the moment it may be best to describe the necesssary preliminaries of Will-training.

In order to do exercises methodically it will be necessary to have a note-book and to record day by day the fulfilment of the daily task. Also it is well to be able to record the time spent each day at the exercise, and so a watch is useful. The task will consist in the keeping of a Resolution, made in the way we have described in the last section. It should run for, say, ten days. At the end of ten days another Resolution is made and another series of tasks begins.

Now as regards the noting down of the Resolution and of the fulfilment of the daily task, the following system may perhaps be found useful and a page of your note-book recording a task might run thus.

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Task No. 10

Exercise in Controlling Impulsiveness

Resolution	Each day for the next ten days I will, *slowly and deliberately*, drop into this box, one by one, a hundred bits of paper.		
No. 1	10/6/1916	Task lasted from	2 p.m. to 2. 8 p.m.
2	11 "	" " "	9 a.m. to 9. 7½ a.m.
3	12 "	" " "	10 a.m. to 10. 8¼ a.m.
4	13 "	" " "	4 p.m. to 4. 9 p.m.
5	14 "	" " "	7 p.m. to 7. 8½ p.m.
6	15 "	" " "	2.30 p.m. to 2.38 p.m.
7	16 "	" " "	9.15 a.m. to 9.22½ a.m.
8	17 "	" " "	11.15 a.m. to 11.22 a.m.
9	18 "	" " "	11 a.m. to 11. 8 a.m.
10	19 "	" " "	10.30 a.m. to 10.37½ a.m.

Notes on the Task. — Task faithfully accomplished. Found it a good exercise for controlling the impulse I felt to go quickly. I had to overcome impatience and feeling of weariness. I felt my Will was really exercised and "braced up." I came to realize a bit that the Will is a power which gets things done according to a predetermined way.

Notes should be written at the end of the task referring to the way the task was done and to the feelings, etc., experienced, and as to whether or not the task was a good one

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for the end in view. A useful exercise may perhaps be repeated later on.

Now briefly the system of Will-training which I suggest to you is this. First of all choose some task, not a hard one, but still one which requires some little effort and some little sacrifice. Next formulate your Resolution in the manner described. Make it very firmly and very earnestly. Put as much will-force as you can into it, and write it out in your note-book as above. Then fulfil the Resolution faithfully, noting the time of fulfilment in your note-book each day. When your first task is finished go on to another. Choose one if possible just a little bit harder — at least not less hard than the previous one, and make and fulfil your Resolution as before. Make this system a part of your day's work and it will secure for you at least one true Will-exercise every day. By this means your Will must increase in strength and efficiency. And when in due time your tasks are fairly difficult and demand a fairly serious Will-effort, you will see very clearly what progress you have made. Meanwhile your perseverance in continuing your daily Will-exercise will be itself of inestimable value

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in winning for you that all-important Will-quality of doggedness and tenacity of purpose. Great patience is required and it would be very foolish to choose difficult tasks at first. What you need above all, and what will do your Will most good, is quiet perseverance in undertaking some little but real Will-exercise every day.

I will now suggest to you various little acts which you may find suitable for the subject of your exercises — they are connected in turn with Spiritual Duties, Discipline and Work, Meals, etc.

(*a*) Some additional morning or evening prayers; Stations of the Cross daily; a chapter of à Kempis to be read slowly daily; kneeling without cushions; praying with arms outstretched; using Holy Water with great reverence; kneeling all through Mass, etc.

(*b*) Getting up at once when called in the morning; punctuality in going to lessons; accuracy in memory lessons; silence in class; observance of school bounds or library rules, etc.

(*c*) Drink half usual amount of tea or milk, or eat half usual amount of butter or meat; eat the first few mouthfuls

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at meals very slowly; take less of some dish that you like; do without sweets, etc.

(*d*) Dress, etc. with utmost tidiness; correct faults of manner; don't put your hands in your pockets; don't jeer or laugh at others; play up well at games you don't like; don't try to get your favorite place at recreation; great neatness in doing your work; salute superiors politely, etc.

These points may suggest tasks. The task chosen should be very definite and continued for ten days. It should not be too hard nor so easy as not to cost any effort.

There is now another type of exercise which is in reality better adapted to Will-training. These exercises resemble exercises undergone to develop for instance the faculty of playing music. To become good at music you exercise your fingers according to, say, the Virgil Clavier system. You concentrate your mind on one thing at a time, namely, free rhythmic movements of the fingers. Or to take an example from football training, you run up and down a field passing a ball from one to another. Here you devote yourself to a simple ele-

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ment of football, namely, catching neatly and passing accurately. You eliminate all the ordinary features of the game in order to exercise yourself and to become proficient in one element of the game. The use of head-line copy-books for learning the art of writing is another example of specialized training. Here all the ordinary elements of writing, forming sentences, etc. are eliminated save only one, that of the exact formation of letters and words. Now in Will-exercises a similar method can be adopted.[1] We can set ourselves Will-tasks where only one feature of the Will-tasks of ordinary life remains. All the other elements are eliminated, and we devote ourselves to one thing alone. Take, for instance, the following task — to turn over one by one slowly and deliberately one hundred pages of a book. This task exercises the Will in controlling impatient and impulsive movements. It is in itself a very trivial, and, at least externally, a silly occupation. But the point to notice is that by it you get exactly what you want, namely an exercise in self-control. Everything else is eliminated, and the Will,

[1] As far as possible to eliminate distracting elements.

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undistracted and unfettered, sets itself to repress impulsiveness.

Exercises of this kind can easily be found. I suggest a few obvious ones, and recommend you to make them the matter of your Resolutions and Will-tasks.[1]

(*a*) EXERCISES IN SELF-CONTROL. — To drop, one by one, *slowly and deliberately* into a box a hundred bits of paper. To stand on a chair *contentedly* with arms outstretched for five minutes. To write out, *with great care*, twenty times, "I will train my Will." To swing your arms very slowly and deliberately for five minutes. To count aloud very slowly up to one hundred, etc.

(*b*) EXERCISES IN MAKING EFFORTS. — To take out and replace your boot laces quietly but resolutely five times. Similarly, to get up and down off a chair twenty times. To copy out ten items from a dictionary accurately, quietly, and energetically. To watch a clock for five minutes, making some sharp energetic movement every quarter minute, etc.

[1] These exercises should also be continued for ten days, like those given above, and should be carried out in the same manner.

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These exercises are of course useless unless the Will is called into play, that is, unless it is employed energetically in Willing during the task. The mere external act that the task calls for is itself of no use whatever. *What is important is that the Will should be exercised.* Other similar tasks can be devised, by means of common objects such as pencils, buttons, pins, matches, etc.

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SECTION VI

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

I SUPPOSE for a moment that you have read this booklet thus far with some interest, and that you are ready to admit that "it would be a good thing to train the Will." But I also seem to hear you saying "All the same, this is not the sort of thing for a fellow like me. I couldn't keep it up. I'm not made that way and I hate that kind of thing." And further I picture to myself that you are looking forward to exams., and games, and holidays — that perhaps you are "fed up" with school-life and school-regulations, and that you have a lot of things and prospects of your own in your head. In fine I'm sure you are not "on" for Will-training just now.

. . . . . .

Well, even in our busiest or most thoughtless and gayest moods there is somewhere, some small corner of our hearts, where the voice of good-sense gets a hearing. And

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so I appeal in that direction and I do so frankly.

. . . . . .

"Because this business of Will-training is wearisome and uninteresting you are not going in for it. That is what you mean, is it not? You prefer to take your chances in life 'with your Will as it is,' and you don't want to start tinkering at yourself! You prefer to follow the beaten track, may I say the broad way, and to leave such special enterprises to saints and idealists. Other men, you would say, have got on well enough without Will-training, and there seems no special reason why you should not get on as well as they. You want to have a good time, while of course doing your duty pretty well, and not to be bothered by cranks."

Have I put your case fairly? If so, will you hear my reply?

You seem to be forgetting, just now, in your present mood, thoughts that come to you at other times, in your best moods; thoughts that come to you when you read or hear about good and brave deeds done, and heroic sacrifices made. At such times you feel you would like to do something big for your country and for your Faith. You even

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resolve to imitate the patriotism or the virtue of the hero you heard about. Sometimes too when you read the history of your country — that long story of splendid effort and sacrifice — you feel yourself deeply stirred and you would be ready, if asked at that moment, to give your life for America. Is it not so? Have you not felt it? Often, too, after a good confession when your heart feels light and full of hope and gladness, and when, perhaps with a blush of shame, you think of what you have been, you resolve very earnestly to be better and to give up evil habits or evil companions. Or perhaps you have been touched more than once by some words of your father or mother, when you had grieved them by something you did. Then you promised to do better and to work hard in future. Perhaps too you have felt your ambition stirred by the example of some one whom you know, and who by great industry and skill has made his way in life, and is now wealthy and influential. Thinking of him, you perhaps made up your mind to strive hard to improve yourself and to win for your father and mother comfort in their old age.

Certainly, at various times of your life

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you have set before yourself noble purposes and big projects. The difficulties before you were made little of. You would do something great, so you resolved. And thus, consciously or unconsciously, you have always carried in your heart an ideal — and you carry it still — and always in your best moods, and at your best moments you return to it and cherish it again. But alas! you have not as yet set yourself to work to prepare yourself for the winning of your ideal. You know that if you look into your heart you will find there weaknesses and failings which block your way. You know you have not as yet the Strength of Will necessary to be a great Catholic or a great American.

And now — do you remember?— just a few moments ago you were saying that you wouldn't and couldn't take the steps that are surely needed. The steps that will make you strong of Will and noble in character! "It would be too uninteresting — too wearisome" you said. But what if it is wearisome? if it does cost? — is it not still worth the labor and worth the pain?

. . . . . .

Well, think it over again. Remember this may be a turning point in your life. Re-

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member that nothing very hard is asked of you — only a little methodical self-sacrifice — a resolution of small compass, well made and well kept, and then another and another, and so on till your Will is strong and stanch. It is not much in itself, and yet it will mean so much for Faith and Country. Not much in itself and yet if left undone it may mean one more tragedy, "for this," as a recent writer has said, "for this I call a tragedy, that a man should die who might have been wise and was not."

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SECTION VII

THE WILL AND HABIT

IT is true that in general we are creatures of habit. We walk, talk, work, eat, write according to habits we have formed, when or how we no longer remember. We derive great advantage from habits because in virtue of them we can do things easily and quickly. We are indeed a mass of habits, "imitators and copiers of our past selves." Some of the habits we have acquired are very complex and wonderful. Some habits we acquired with difficulty and others with great ease. Some habits we gained unconsciously or almost involuntarily, some with full deliberation. It is of the latter that I wish now to speak, and especially of those which are both voluntary and evil.

It is, we know, easy to acquire an evil habit and very hard to get rid of one. The first time we performed the evil act that eventually became a habit we brought about a physical change in ourselves. It may have

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been a bitter word of sarcasm, or a blow struck in anger, or a deliberate lie, or an act of stealing or of immodesty. Whatever it was it left a physical trace behind. We may have repented of it bitterly, and made atonement for it, but nevertheless the trace of that sin remained in our nature and it was easier to do it a second time. We were no longer the same as before. Then perhaps a second time we deliberately committed the same fault. The trace grew deeper. Again we committed it and this time it was much easier to do it, and we felt much less repugnance. The habit was formed.

And now, perhaps after very many falls we find that the evil habit is very strong. We have tried from time to time to rid ourselves of it, but we have failed. It is there still, and now once more we want to rid ourselves of it. What are we to do? If we do not overcome it, it will ruin our lives and bear us irresistibly toward a destiny so terrible that we dread to think of it. What are we to do? Can an evil habit be overcome? And if so, how is it to be overcome? Yes! an evil habit, no matter how strong and how deeply imbedded in our nature, can be overcome, but naturally it costs

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much to overcome it. There is a sure means, and only one means, and that is the formation of a new habit, a good habit which runs counter to the evil one. "Habit is overcome by habit." If you are habitually deceitful and false, you must little by little build up a good habit of sincerity and truth. If you are habitually idle and lazy, you must build up the virtue of industry and of working energetically. If you are habitually sensual and immodest, you must build up the good habit of self-denial and delicate modesty.

But how are such new habits to be formed? How am I to become sincere and truthful, seeing that I am constantly telling lies and deceiving people? Is it sufficient on several occasions to tell the truth and to be open and frank? No! the mere repetition of such acts would not be sufficient to form a strong counter-habit. You must very deliberately, very methodically, very resolutely, and with all the strength of your Will set yourself to will truth and frankness. And here we return to the principles we laid down in the section on Resolutions. We form new habits by means of Resolutions strongly made and faithfully kept, and tenaciously persisted in and repeated. We must

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build up the virtue of frankness and truthfulness, part by part, bit by bit, just as we pointed out the way to acquire the good habit or virtue of punctuality. There is no need here to go through the form we prescribed in the section on Resolutions, but it must be faithfully adhered to if a strong new counter-habit is to be formed that will eliminate or render nugatory an existing evil habit.

Hence the secret of overcoming evil habits lies in the art of forming good habits by means of Resolutions. In this matter, of course, we must, more than in any other, seek aid and grace by prayer and the Sacraments. Some evil habits are so strong that no mere natural force of Will could overcome them. But force of Will aided by God's grace succeeds and can always succeed, and force of Will, as the best natural means, must be called up and used to the fullest extent.

I need not, I think, dwell upon the importance of overcoming evil habits at the very earliest date. The longer we indulge such habits, the harder it becomes to conquer them. We must get rid of them at once. After-remedies come too late. There

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must be no delay in this matter; we must lay the axe to the root while the root is not too strong. From your own experience of life, from the examples of others, you know how terrible a thing it is to be a slave to an evil habit, for instance to be "a slave to drink." Such a one is wretched beyond words. He brings misery and shame on himself and on those with whom he lives. His weakness of Will makes his life on earth a hell. He hates his vice. He hates his slavery. He longs to be free — but again and again he falls helplessly, as often indeed as occasion presents itself.

For you, there may be many minor evil habits that you should rid yourself of — habits that will tell against you in after life, and habits that are unbecoming. Perhaps you have a bitter way of criticizing others, perhaps you have a habit of betting, or of swearing, or of working in a slipshod way, or of roughness and untidiness or of selfishness and self-indulgence — whatever faulty or improper habits you may have, the sooner you get rid of them the better, for later on you will find it very hard to do so.

When fighting against an evil habit we are up against an insidious and unrelenting

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foe. This of course applies more particularly to evil habits in the strict sense, which are founded in passions. We have to fight with all the courage, constancy, and wisdom we command. Half-hearted efforts are of no avail. We must fight with all our Will-power and keep up the fight to the end, in spite of defeats and failures. We must never lose heart even though we seem to have lost. We must still fight on and regard our failures as additional and powerful motives for fresh efforts.

"If you want to abolish a habit and its accumulated circumstances as well," writes Dr. Oppenheim, "you must grapple with the matter as earnestly as you would with a physical enemy. You must go into the encounter with all the tenacity of determination, with all the fierceness of resolve — yea, even with a passion for success that may be called vindictive. No human enemy can be as insidious, as persevering, as unrelenting as an unfavorable habit. It never sleeps, it needs no rest. . . . It is like a parasite that grows with the growth of the supporting body, and like a parasite it can best be killed by violent separation and by crushing."

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SECTION VIII

THE WILL TO WIN

THE best spirit in which to enter a fight is the spirit of confidence and self-reliance. "I'm going to win this fight. I'm sure of that, for I know I've got it in me, and I'm going to do my best." That spirit redoubles our strength and energy. It evokes all that is pluckiest and most enterprising in us. It fires us. It electrifies us. It gives us the dogged tenacity to hold out in spite of many a heavy blow. It awakens the "no surrender" spirit. It spells victory. *It means the Will to Win.*

Confidence and self-reliance, combined with Strength of Will, insure success, in so far as it can be insured. Great-hearted, courageous, and intense resoluteness cannot be baulked of victory. To those who have this spirit nothing seems impossible; "impossible" in their eyes is a word made for fools alone. The Will as a mighty spiritual force, an inexhaustible reserve of power and energy, is there at hand helping, sup-

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porting, and seconding their efforts. They know its value, they feel its inspiration, and they trust in its strength.

The spirit of confidence and self-reliance can be acquired, and it is well worth acquiring. It can be acquired by the Will-exercises suggested in this booklet. Each task, well and faithfully performed, will increase our sense of power to achieve, it will increase our self-reliance. Each task well fulfilled will give us good reason to know that we have a Will capable of facing a project and of carrying it through, and this feeling and conviction is the basis of confidence. The recollection of past tasks well done will help us to face new tasks confidently. The meaning of confidence and self-reliance, and the importance of that attitude of mind will gradually come home to us. Then we shall strive to cultivate it and to make it an habitual state of mind. This brave, cheery spirit is of inestimable value. It is good for ourselves, for soul and body, and it is good for others. The man who can face suffering and difficulty gaily and gladly, without trouble of mind and without being depressed, is a source of inspiration to others. His buoyancy and cheeriness not only makes

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his own burden lighter, but it shows others how to bear their burdens. To be bright, to "keep smiling," to "carry on" joyfully; that admirable spirit is the natural outcome of confidence and self-reliance — the outcome of the *Will to Win*.

The chief enemy and the antithesis of the Will to Win is discouragement. It is a feeling of depression, hopelessness, and to some extent, of indifference. We fret, worry, brood over our troubles and the difficulties before us, and we become down-cast. Things look black and gloomy. The trouble seems to grow larger and larger. Our spirit becomes oppressed. Our energy and enterprise fail us. We feel ourselves heavy and inert masses. All inspiration disappears. Our Strength of Will seems to have left us. We begin first to fear that we shall be defeated, then we anticipate and count on defeat, and finally set ourselves to await it. We feel we can't struggle on any more, that we must give up, that failure is inevitable — and then, giving way to discouragement, we throw up the sponge.

What a contrast there is between the two spirits! The Will to Win, and Discouragement. The first spells success, the

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second failure. And yet neither spirit can prevail unless we deliberately cultivate it. Discouragement only becomes fatal when we wilfully cherish it and submit to it. The Will to Win only triumphs if we resolutely and deliberately cultivate and develop it. Each of the two spirits is intimately connected with the Will. The spirit of confidence and self-reliance, which I call the *Will to Win* is the Will active, full of life, emphatically asserting itself. Discouragement on the other hand is the negation of Will; it is, so to say, the Will effacing itself and giving place to animal feeling and impulse.

Whether we like to admit it or not there is for us, in our private lives, great danger at times of giving way to discouragement. Falls and failures, disappointments, suffering, ill-health, unkindnesses, and betrayals will cross our path in life. Things that we feared, and that we hated to think of, will happen. Harsh and cruel things will be done to us. Sufferings long and bitter will be ours. All that we must expect and face, but we must face all in the right spirit. We must not give way to discouragement. It is no remedy for ill. It does no good. It

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makes things worse. We must face our trials with deep Christian resignation, we must take them from God's loving hands as gifts, and we must bear up under them with a splendid spirit of confidence, and a Will to Win through.

I now offer a few suggestions, which you may find useful and helpful in dealing with this fatal, perhaps for us most fatal of evils, discouragement.

(1) In doing Will-tasks deliberately cultivate the feeling and spirit of confidence and self-reliance.

(2) Prepare yourself beforehand for suffering. Think well on what it means, its uses, how to make it help you onward and upward, and how to offer it cheerfully to God. Convince yourself that suffering and failure must come, and make up your mind how you are to bear them when they do come. Make failure play itself false. Make it a "stepping stone to higher things."

(3) When suffering and failure have come upon you, hold on tenaciously to your good resolutions. If the first shock has caused you temporary discour-

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agement, try to shake it off as soon as possible. Remove its cause if you can. If it is a sin, get rid of it without delay. Regain as soon as you can your normal state of trust in God and joyful confidence. If it is physical pain and suffering, some illness for instance, make yourself thank God for it and rejoice for it. I once asked an old Irishman, who was limping along the road, how he got his rheumatism. He looked at me with some surprise and then answered rather sternly — "How does anybody get it? Didn't the good God give it to me — praise be to His Holy name." In that old man, I need not say, there was no discontent or discouragement.

(4) Keep alive within your heart a love for what is fair and good and great. Look round at the works of Nature; observe and study a little the beauty of flowers, of mountains, and of the sea. Read good books and the stories of great men. Furnish your mind with the marvels of science. Open your heart to the call of great causes

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— the cause of the poor and oppressed above all. Take an interest in big problems and keep yourself aloof from the sordid and petty pursuits of evil doers. You will find, I think, that love of truth and beauty and great causes, will form a good and solid background for the spirit of Confidence and Self-reliance.

And now, to conclude this booklet, let me remind you once again that the work of training and strengthening your Will is well within your power. You can make your Will very strong if you are prepared to sacrifice yourself a little, and to perform patiently and perseveringly and in the proper spirit tasks such as I have suggested. It rests with you, and you alone, to decide whether or not you will do so. In this choice no power on earth can hamper your liberty. Choose then, and if you resolve to perfect your Will, and are faithful to your resolution, your life will be truly great, and you will deserve well of your Church and of your country. "Choose the America that you think is best and fashion yourself in its likeness. If you wish to see America be-

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come a perfect country, a Kingdom of God, do yourself become a perfect individual, a Kingdom of God. The perfect country can only be established by individual men and women who are striving after perfection — perfection not only in an imaginary nation which is outside themselves but in the actual nation which is within themselves, in their own brains and hearts and sinews, to mar or to make beautiful as they will."

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APPENDIX

The following Sections A, B, C, are written with a view to helping those who have made up their minds to devote themselves to Will-training.

(A)

If the theory of Will-training is new to you, it will be well for you to think over and master the matter contained in this booklet. Try to understand it fully, so as to be able to explain it to others. Try in a small way to become a "specialist" in this matter and read over other books about the Will. For the present, get a good note-book, and at your leisure write out in order answers to the following questions:

(1) What is the special work of the Will? How does it differ from the work of the Intellect?

(2) What do you mean by "*Strong Will?*" What are the advantages of having a Strong Will?

(3) Does the Will need special training?

(4) What is a *Resolution?* What is the best way to ensure its fulfilment?

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(5) What is a *Habit?* How is an evil habit best overcome?

(6) Explain the methods of Will-training suggested in this booklet.

(7) What is the best type of exercise for the training of the Will? Give examples.

(8) Explain the words, "*Effort*," "*Self-control*," "*Perseverance*."

(9) What are the causes of and remedies for *Discouragement?*

(10) What is "the Will to Win?"

(B)

It would be well next to write in your note-book your own reflections, or short essays if you like, on such topics as the following:

(1) The Influence of Men of Character.

(2) My Ideal American.

(3) The Secret of Success.

(4) The Uses and Triumphs of Failure.

(5) Temperance and National Prosperity.

(6) "The Need of Training."

(7) National Characteristics.

(8) "Haec est victoria quae vincit mundum Fides Nostra." ("This is the victory which overcometh the world, Our Faith.")

(9) "Strength of Will is better than Wealth or Learning."

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(10) Enterprise, Effort, and Self-control.

(11) "Gladly I lived and gladly I die,
And I lay me down with a Will."

(12) "The only way to be a patriotic American is to do your best to become a perfect man."

(C)

Early in this booklet I spoke of your *Ideal* — as being that of a thorough Catholic and American — and I spoke of the necessity of "furnishing your mind." This work you can do for yourself in private, by reading and studying good books, better even than it can be done at school. *You should set yourself then to build up your own little library of good books* — many of them you can buy very cheaply — there are hundreds of excellent booklets published by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland and England, by the "Action Populaire" of Rheims, by the "Volksverein" of München-Gladbach, and by the Catholic publishers of America. Books on Social Action, Political Economy, Science, Art, History, and Religious Controversy by Catholic authors, together with Lives of great and good men should form an important part of your library. Study well the great problems of modern life, the

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various aspects of amending the struggle between the forces of good and evil, and strive to understand the sufferings of the poor and oppressed. Study well the glorious story of America and learn from it the splendid wisdom of putting Faith before Prosperity, Virtue before Riches. *If you love good books, and draw fruit from them, your mind will be broadened, your Faith strengthened, your sense of right and justice rendered delicate and true, your mind will be admirably furnished for life's work, and your Ideal will not be a false Ideal.*

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